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Lenora

AND OTHER POEMS

WALTER DRANE MARTIN



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LENORA AND OTHER POEMS

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WALTER DRANE MARTIN



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1909

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SONG OF MY BOOK

(Acrostic)

*Deny me not a pleasant look,
O greet me with a smile!
Refuse me not a cozy nook,
Or read me just awhile;
Transport me if I'm in the way,
High on the topmost shelf;
Enslave me for some rainy day,
And keep me for yourself.*

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"The ground was white with snow."

LENORA AND OTHER POEMS.

THE INVITATION.

(From Lenora.)

To _____.

THIS Christmas, Sir, now won't you come
And spend the day with me?
You're more than welcome to my home;
So come, and you will see.

Perhaps you do not know me, friend;
Perhaps you will not write
To th' little girl who nursed you when
So ill one Christmas night.

That evening can you forget?
The ground was white with snow—
When 'round the curve the express met
A wild and reckless foe?

That night when you lay nearly dead!
That wreck! That frightful crash!
When more than one to heaven sped—
Your wound—that fearful gash!

The little cottage on the hill—
Perhaps you remember yet
That cold, bleak night! My heart stood still!
That scene! Can I forget?

The dead and wounded here were brought,
And you unconscious lay.
And how that good old doctor fought
To keep grim Death away!

And all was in confusion when
The next day you came to—
You called me little sweetheart then,
And would I wait for you?

When you were well enough to leave,
My father was taken ill;
Is sleeping where the willows cleave
The garden on the hill.

With mother, left the little home;
Since then long years have passed.
Your sweetheart's now a woman grown,
And true to th' question asked.

So Christmas, Sir, then can't you come
To spend the day with me?
I sign the old familiar name
In all sincerity,

LENORA.



TO LENORA.

AH! true. Indeed, long years did pass;
The fault was not my own.
I've tried in vain, in vain, alas!
To hear where you had gone.

And oft I've pined to see your face.
Now can in truth this be,
That I shall have the joy to trace
The olden smile for me?

And clasp your little hand in mine
And hear you speak my name?
God grant that this day's joy be thine,
And New Year's just the same!

God grant that all thy years and days
Be filled with glowing hours,
And all thy dreams and all thy ways
Be ever among the flowers!

Should I hear first life's tidal wave
And my soul go out to its sea,
Give, then, a flower from your path to my grave
And a prayer from your heart for me.

Yours, ———.

MY VESPER BELL.

(Lenora.)

WHEN twilight's magic veil is drawn,
'Tis then, Lenora, you are—
With nature, gentle as its dawn—
You are my evening star.

And O, Lenora, when you're near,
Sweet heaven claims the spell;
For heaven dwells in your heart, my dear;
Your voice my vesper bell!



"You kissed the bud."

DISPOSITION.

(Lenora.)

I DEEM I know the reason why
There are no clouds upon your sky.
A nature, pure and bright as yours,
Holds captive from a budding rose
A *sunbeam*, finding there repose.
You came along, and ere it knew
You kissed the bud and sipped the dew,
A *dewdrop* that it nestled to;
It tried to flee, but found its way
To the garden in your heart that day.

LENORA.

YOU'RE pure as an Easter Lily
And graceful as its pose;
In truth, you are more beautiful
Than any Beauty Rose.

Lenora, I'd slight a garden,
With all the buds of June—
A garden of the antique style
In bud or all abloom;

I'd fail to catch its beauty;
I might, yet would not dare
To think it was more beautiful
Than you if *you* were there.

LAST PLEA.

(Lenora.)

IF love, Lenora, holds a blessing,
Then write me, tell me, I implore;
For long you've kept me doubting, guessing;
Ah, write me truly yes or no!

Ah, long you've tried me; I've been patient.
Love now revolts a longer test.
Just keep me young or make me ancient;
Lenora, set my fears at rest.

Although unworthy, don't forsake me.
O, may I trust 'tis Heaven's will!
Say that you love me; simply take me,
Be it for better or for ill.

Schoolltime, playtime, coasting, dances,
And O, one day can't you recall
When skating, taking foolish chances,
Just how the ice gave way with all?

I know you thanked me, I remember;
And if 'twas wrong, 'twas not amiss.
I saved your life in that December,
Yet you repaid me with—a kiss.

A kiss, the first, no doubt, for either,
The first for me and truly last;
Perhaps 'twould have been best for neither;
It sealed my fate, the die was cast.

And oft since then I've longed for daring,
To show again what I would do.
A cruel thought, yet be forbearing;
You know I'd risk my life for you.

Ah! risk it? Yes, and gladly give it
If I but lost it serving you.
Yet now I'd rather live and live it;
This seems a saner, brighter view.

Last year you asked me in your garden,
"Just how I thought you looked at best."
I answered. Then you begged my pardon,
And, blushing, said: "You speak in jest."

I said: "A flower all filled with nectar,
As fair as any Bridal Rose;
You'd have a Humming Bird Protector
If I would let him find repose."

I see you now, the sunlight streaming
As then it shone upon your hair.
I know that angels heard your dreaming;
You seemed as one transplanted there.

I trust this may not seem ungainly;
Lenora, set my fears at rest.
O, write me, tell me truly, plainly;
O, grant me all that I request.

HER REPLY.

(Lenora.)

WHEN our wedding bells ring,
May the angels all sing,
And His blessing drift down from above;
And may sunshine attend
That near dear day, and end
All your fears, for I love you, My Love!

TO HER PICTURE.

(Lenora.)

LITTLE band of burnished gold,
Could that dear image that you hold—
Dear image of an angel's face—
Could it but speak from thy embrace,
'Twould chide my grief—O cruel fate!
To leave me thus disconsolate!
Lenora! Lenora! could you but hear,
Could you but speak one word of cheer,
I would not deem it strange nor fear
If you should call aloud my name;
Nay, 'tis thy silence that I blame.
O, silent lips and pensive brow!
Compassionless, still silent thou?
Yea, silent. Ah! you deem my grief
A surer way to quick relief.

That night, Lenora, can I forget?
Forget my heart has known regret?
Forget the past, forgetting you,
Forgetting all, could this be true,
If heaven—and should I so decree—
Could bring forgetfulness to me,
And all my grief and woe to calm,
Would I accept or crave that balm?
Forgetting all, would I adjure
Of heaven this, or still endure
The longing and the woe I feel?
Ah! no, I would not care to steal



"A little band of burnished gold."

Away from sorrow, mem'ry's isle ;
I'd rather grieve for you than smile ;
I'd rather o'er thy lonely grave
Keep vigil there and hear the wave
Of Ocean's pulsing tide and know
"That love is love for evermore,"
And all I loved lies there below.
I'd rather stroll o'er memory's ways
And hear the voice of yesterdays,
To dwell upon each smile and word
That I have seen from you and heard.
I'd rather dwell on some kind deed
That I had done for you and plead
With memory to recall to me
Dear bygone joys that e'er should be
Forget-me-nots of heaven and thee.
I rather live and feel the thorn
"Of sorrow's crown" and feel 'twas worn
For One I loved, now far away ;
I'd pray for strength in memory
Than to forget or dwell in peace
Or be at rest should memory cease.



THE STORY OF HER DEATH.

(Lenora.)

THE STORM.

THAT night, O love, can I forget?
One year ago! The sun had set,
The sea was rough, the sky was black,
A storm was hovering o'er our track.
Our captain's face was stern and pale.
Would he to port—our craft was frail—
To port, or would he brave the sea?
And port was near—which would it be?
“To port!” he cried, and every sail
Was turned to tack against the gale.
Swift sped our craft; a gallant crew
Manned her, forced her, and held her true.
A light from out the harbor shone;
This gave us comfort—hope was born.
Sure we could anchor—? Nay, the storm
Burst in an instant; hope was gone!

You did not see, you were below;
I volunteered to brave the blow.
I saw the lightning's livid flash,
The pent-up signal, heard the lash
Of wind and wave, and knew its cost
And felt that moment all was lost.
An instant, and the wind had veered,
Great waves to mountain heights were reared,
Strong seamen from the decks were borne;
Both mast and sail were shattered, torn—

A shock, a crash that rent in twain
Our ship and hurled us to the main ;
All was confusion and despair.
I thought I saw your golden hair ;
I swam to save ; you were not there ;
A broken spar was my relief.
Why did I grasp ? to surer grief ?
Another soul was just in reach ;
I saved, yet how we reached the beach
I do not know ; 'twas Heaven's care
That helped me lay my burden there.

Alas ! the one I tried to save
Was dead ; she died upon the wave.
Lenora ! I know I called to thee ;
Your name my love called out to sea.
Lenora ! Lenora ! to you I cried,
Then fell exhausted near the side
Of one I thought another's bride.

I fell asleep and dreamed, my love,
A snow-white ship came from above.
It seemed to circle o'er and o'er
An island I had seen before—
A lovely ship, a precious thing ;
I saw the flashing of its wing.
I dreamed a dove came in from sea,
Snow-white it was, and flew to me ;
I felt its flutter on my cheek ;
I tried to catch it, tried to speak.
It flew away, away it flew
Up to the ship. I dreamed 'twas you.

“Good-by!” I cried. “Sweet one, adieu!”
Farewell, bright ship, it sailed from view.
Then darkness fell. O, what a cloud
To mar that vision with its shroud!
And such a change from joy to pain!
I might have dreamed that dream again;
Yet no, the shifting of my dream
Recalls to view that former theme
Of grave reality, the wreck.
And standing there upon the deck,
I saw, as though ’twere not a dream,
A ship, a phantom ship did seem
To crash its prow midway our own!
A shock that hurled us to the foam;
Again the broken spar I found,
Again a hand was sinking down,
Again I grasped that helpless hand.
I ’woke, and lo! upon the sand,
Pale, chill, and speechless on the strand,
Alone and in a foreign land,
I kissed your face, my love, caressed
Mute lips, and all my grief expressed.

Lenora! Lenora! have you not heard
Your name, my cry—that stricken word?
A life crew near that fatal reef,
They heard and came to my relief;
And oft they say when storms are high
They hear me still, your name my cry.



"All was confusion and despair."

A TRIBUTE.

(To Lenora.)

NO matter what the seasons are,
I've lost their meaning now;
I do not note the things that are,
And oft I wonder how
My heart endures the grief that's there.
And O if I could see
His cross down in the vale of prayer,
My heart would lighter be.

Spring has no rhythm, life is prose,
Though birds are singing still;
For absent and in death's repose,
Though 'twas the Master's will,
Sleeps One I loved who cannot hear
The summer wind that blows;
The absent One, alas! and ne'er
To see another rose.

She will not see another Spring;
Her soul has taken flight.
She knows not of my sorrowing;
I trust that I am right.
For if she knew of my despair,
It might disturb her rest;
I would not care to have her bear
My cross if she's been blessed.

I cannot see the cross that dwells
Down in the vale of prayer ;
Yet faith has whispered, something tells
That it lies hidden there.
O grief, that never sees the light,
When will the cross appear ?
If hidden, let it vanish night,
For she is waiting there.



DON'T ASK ME WHY.

(Lenora.)

DON'T ask me why my heart is sad ;
My sorrow is a sacred thing.
Without it I could ne'er be glad,
Though I were chosen Pleasure's King—
Don't ask me why ; just ask the wind.

Don't ask me why ; consult the wind
That cards the leaves from yonder hill.
It has a grief akin to mine,
Deep-seated, and is never still—
Don't ask me why, just ask the wind.

Just ask the wind, and it may tell
Why leaves are falling from the vine
Here on the porch she loved so well ;
Just ask the vine, whose hand did twine
The tresses of this jessamine.

Don't ask me why yon little mound
Lies sea-shell covered over there.
Tread softly ; it is sacred ground ;
Speak gently, heaven has a care—
Don't ask me why my heart is there.

WHEN I FORGET.

(Lenora.)

WHEN I forget you, sweetheart mine,
You whom I've loved so long,
'Twill be when birds of every kind
Forget their given song.

'Twill be when stars no longer glow,
When suns no longer shine;
When Fate shall his wild trumpet blow,
When dead lies ancient Time.

Could I forget you, sweetheart, then?
E'en then when time's no more?
Ah! no, my soul will seek you when
We tread that brighter shore.

AFTERMATH.

(Lenora.)

'TIS Spring again, and birds sing just the same,
And balmy skies are just as blue and fair,
And bud and fern as beautiful and sweet
As last year's were; and of the first I place
One lone, one little solitary bloom
To brighten up thy lonely grave, and feel
'Tis but a tribute of my love, for here
Beneath this sod my heart's dead flower lies.
Methought it fitting, yet I almost felt
When first I saw its petals ope and smile
On the bright sun that warmed it unto life
That 'twas thy spirit back to earth returned.
Yet when I saw that others were in bud,
I knew full well that this one soon would die;
I knew 'twas mortal-like, and as myself
But dust would bloom and then to dust return.
Why, then, regret to offer it to thee?
Sweet little flower, breathe thy life to her,
And tell her that I freshened thee with tears—
Rest, little flower, bear my message home.

MY STARS.

A FATHER sat one summer's eve
Within his cottage door,
And near his side a little child
Was scanning heaven o'er.

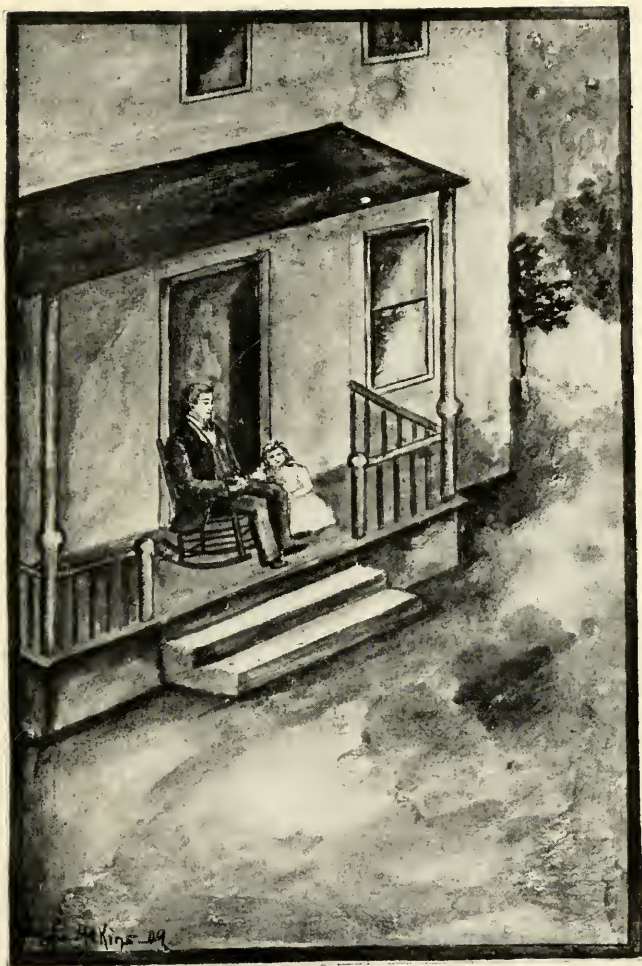
Her golden head she softly pressed
Against her father's knee—
Now gazing on the ev'ning star
Said all inquiringly:

"O, father, which of all the stars
That glisten in the sky
Will be at home for you and me
And mother when we die?"

The old man softly stroked her hair,
And musingly he said:
"The brightest of them all will be
The orb where you will tread.

Then yours and mother's home will be
The star of early morn,
And mine will be the ev'ning star,
I think the brightest born.

By morning and by evening
Our lives will happy be,
For I can spend the day with you
And you the night with me!"



"A father sat one summer's eve."

THE ANGLER'S PRAYER.

I'M winding up the reel of life ;
I'm angling in the past ;
I've straightened out life's tangled line ;
I'm ready for the cast.

I dream of fairer shores and skies ;
I stand upon the strand ;
My soul knows of an angling place ;
I wait the cast, command.

O line, be strong ! O faith, be true !
Though long the cast and dark,
O Christ ! Great Angler ! be Thou near
And guide me to the mark.

I boast not of a right to dwell,
To angle on Thy shore ;
'Tis but a hope that I've done well,
Thy mercy, nothing more.

Yet winding up the reel of life
Since angling in the past,
My efforts seem too frail to say :
"Success will crown my cast."

WHAT'S THY SORROW, O WIND?

WHEN it snows—ah! beautiful snow—do you
know,

Can you tell me the sorrow the wild winds blow?
Why complain ye, O Wind? Why not whistle in glee?
For what could be fairer or brighter to see
Than a snow? What is purer? There's nothing below
That is e'en half so fair as the beautiful snow.
Lo! the clouds have cast off their white polka-dot veil,
And snow birds are chirping out there in the gale.
Hear the tinkling of bells? Look, see what a sight:
The hillsides are covered with sledges in flight!
All else in all nature seems happy and gay.
What's thy sorrow, O Wind? Speak, O tell me, I pray,
Why moan and why groan? Hark! a knock at my
door.

Ah! 'tis plain I know now it is God's own poor.
I thought not of them, yet the "Wind" knew best.
True, "the rose has its thorns;" in all happiness
Somewhere in the realm of its target, the heart,
An Archer lies hidden to wing it his dart.



"Across the meadow of my dream."

YOUTH.

AS game as any mountain trout
Was youth, and we had many a bout ;
And oft I've played him in the nook
Of pleasure's stream, now in, now out,
Just as an angler would who'd hook
A good six-pounder ! Skill it took
To play bass youth as I have played.
Yet what of skill ? Alas ! dismayed,
I could not land him ; age decayed
Life's silken line ; I knew its cost—
A flirt, a snap, and youth was lost.

Yet oft I feel that youth is near,
O youth, and fancy that I hear
Your call as from that happy stream,
A little way just over there
Across the meadow of my dream.
Could you but come or could I steal
Across that meadow and once feel
That you would play again my reel,
I'd welcome old age ; for they say
That you return oft then and play.

ADAIR.

ONLY a song to thee, Adair,
Only a dreamer's song,
Only a theme of a dream so fair—
The dreamer means no wrong.

'Tis not a song, Adair, of hate;
I've nothing to atone.
'Twas fate, Adair; Adair, 'twas fate
That makes me dream alone.

Alone, yet not alone, Adair;
Sweet heaven grants a dole.
And oft I feel that you are near,
As in the days of old.

Only a dream, yet dreams must fade;
Only a song, Adair.
'Twas fate, O Love, yet not dismayed;
Sweet heaven has a care.

TENNESSEE.

LAST night, fair Maid, O Tennessee,
I dreamed of youth, I dreamed of thee.
As fair, as young, you seemed to be
As one from heaven sent to me.
Yet why from heaven should I say?
You spoke of crime, of anarchy,
And then you wept, ah! bitter tears;
I tried to soothe your grief, your fears
By saying: "God has many cares."
"I know," you said. "Yes, God defends;
He knows our cares; He understands."

Then, sponsor, fairest of them all
That ever graced a Capitol,
Weep not, for sons of noble sires
Are wooing still thy beck, thy call.
You've but to whisper, and the fire
Of chivalry thou wilt inspire.
To aid thee and to keep thy place
Secure in history's embrace,
Or to defend should crime deface
Thy matchless robes. Aye, Tennessee,
Thou hast been all that maid should be.

O sponsor maid, O Tennessee,
What knowest thou of anarchy?
Thou art too pure for such a thief
To mar thy heart's tranquillity.
His way is ruin, his law is grief;
He holds no place; society

Condemns and must, or else decay.
At this you shuddered, slipped away;
I dreamed your youthful hair turned gray—
A star shot from the heights above;
You left me saying: "God is love."



EASTER.

(Acrostic.)

Ere long and mother earth will give
An Easter Lily Day,
Sweet emblems, bidding hope to live.
“There is no death,” they say.
Ere long and many a flower will peep
Refreshened from its clay.

SPRING.

SPRING, Spring, Spring,
Spring with its birds and flowers,
Light sunny skies, bright butterflies,
Spring with its sheen and showers—
Spring! Spring! Spring!

Sing, sing, sing,
Sing out your sweet songs, O bird,
Sad hearts to cheer, glad hearts to hear;
Let not a sad note be heard—
Sing! sing! sing!

Flow, flow, flow,
Flow, little brook, in delight;
Play hide and seek, gay-hearted; O speak!
Speak out your glad joy in flight!
Flow! flow! flow!

Swing, swing, swing;
Seek now, little child, the vine swing.
Springtime is youth, swingtime is truth,
Swingtime is everything!
Swing! swing! swing!



"Spring with its birds and flowers."



COULD EYE BUT SEE.

COULD human eye but catch a glimpse
Of things that dwell beyond,
The soul, responsive to that sight,
Would break its earthly bond!

E'en dreams that mortals dare to dream
In sleep, or plied with might
Would be the A B C of thought
Compared to such a sight.

'Tis written: "Eye has never seen,
And ear has never heard,
Nor can the heart of man conceive
The glory of His word."

Man knows but little; science fails
To prove the things we see;
E'en faith may falter, yet some day
Faith finds that hidden key.

CHRISTMAS.

(Acrostic.)

Can Bethlehem's star be shining still?
How could it ever set?
Resplendent o'er faith's trysting hill,
It's shining for us yet.
Shine on, bright star, Faith has the sight;
The eyes of Faith behold.
May Faith to all reveal its light,
A beacon to the soul!
Shine on, bright star, shine on!

THOUGHTS OF OTHER DAYS.

(Christmas.)

JUST thirty years ago to-night,
And dreams were in the fire;
Just thirty years ago, and bright
Was hope of youth's desire;
Just thirty years ago, and then
At breaking of the dawn
My heart thrilled with a boy's delight—
The joy of Christmas morn.

For Santa Claus had filled the socks
Brimful of nuts and toys,
While on the floor were books and blocks
Just made for little boys;
And fond and loving ones were near
Whose hearts were glad to see
Me happy when the mantel clock
Struck that glad Jubilee.

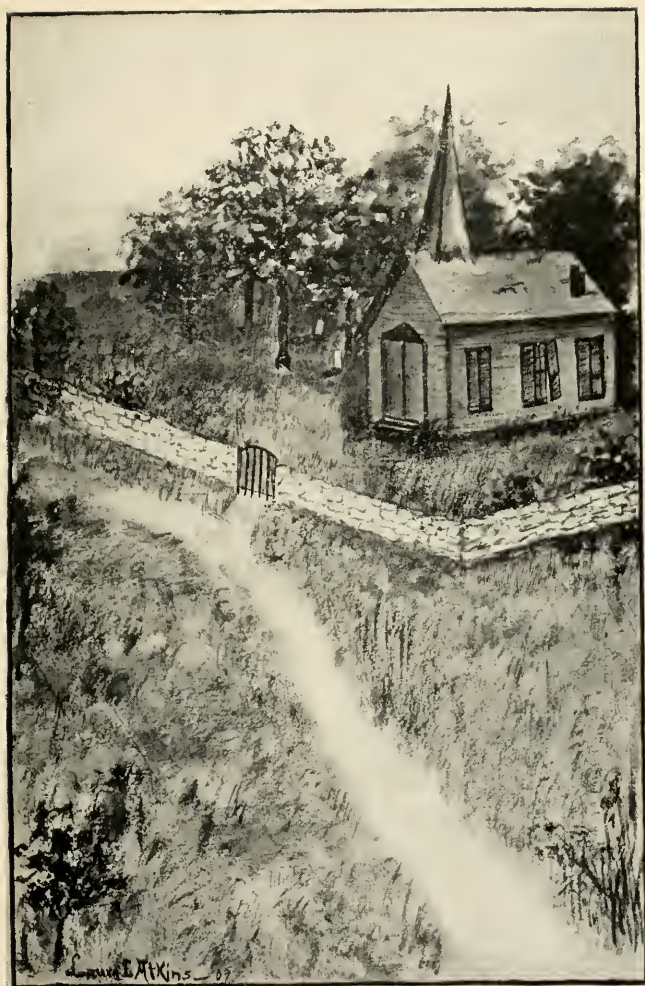
Just thirty years ago; ah me!
I loved those childish years,
The happiest to memory;
They held no care nor fears.
Just thirty years ago to-night,
Yet what a span since then!
The boy has known his grief and cares—
The common fate of men.

A STRANGE REPLY.

While out walking one afternoon in the suburbs of a small village I noticed in the distance, situated on the crest of a hill, a small dilapidated and seemingly deserted church in the left-hand corner of quite a large inclosure of land. Ascending the slope, I entered, and my attention was soon called to an old man busily engaged in trimming the grass from a small mound which seemed to be the grave of a child. On nearing the spot I addressed him and asked who slept there. For a while he eyed me without replying; but, soon collecting his thoughts, he said:

“Sir,

Here rests a form beneath this sod,
A child, and I remember well
The day her spirit fled to God;
And it was strange and hard to tell
How those who must have loved her well
Could stand and hear
The sound of cold earth as it fell,
And shed no tear.
Long years have passed; but since I've heard
That, although much distressed in mind,
Those two whose hearts I thought had erred
In such a loss to parent-kind
Did Christ-like keep their grief confined
Or weep for shame—
The child of whom I speak was blind
Until death came.



"Here rests a form beneath this sod."

THANKSGIVING.

(Acrostic.)

That we may live to see Thy face,
Have mercy, Father, give us grace.
All else save this in life is vain,
Non-heavenly, and barren gain.
Keep life's frail bark, though storms may roll,
Secure, and guide it to its goal.
Gird Freedom's flag around the mast,
Intrepid, give it to the blast.
Vouchsafe that all our deeds and days,
Including this, be days of praise,
Neglecting not our Ship of State;
Guard, guide, protect, and keep it great.

THE HUMMING BIRD.

TELL me, little Humming Bird, O tell me, tell me
true,

What is it that the flowers say? I know they speak
to you.

Or tell me what you say to them when you a-wooing
go?

If you're a flirt, then no one knows, because you speak
so low.

Or are you a physician sent to cure some ill or pain?
Do flowers die of broken hearts? Do they of ills com-
plain?

Or are you just a little thief or just a dainty beau?
Say, little doctor, beau, or thief, just tell me all you
know.

No wonder that you are so dear, so fair, and fleet of
wing.

I'd be a flirt if I were you, you gaudy little thing;
No doubt you are, and that is why you seem so bright
and gay.

A million sweethearts I would have and love my life
away!

TWO PICTURES.

I DREAMED last night an Angel came to me ;
I saw her form ; her face I could not see.
A brilliant light was pulsing o'er her head,
A blinding light that awed me till she said :
"Be not afraid ; I did not mean to scare ;
I came to teach ; my name it is Beware."
So soft her voice, so sweet to me it came.
She called me child ; then by my given name
Spake softly, saying : "Look you, now behold
The Holy City and its streets of gold."
Thus as she spoke the strange light disappeared ;
All then was total darkness, and I feared
My dream was drawing to an end, when lo !
Upon the ceiling of my room did grow
A picture, Heaven ! All beautiful to see !
A flash ! 'Twas o'er. Then spake she unto me
And said : "The seekers find, and seeking you will win.
There is no sorrow there, no death, no sin ;
All, all is joy, one bright eternal morn ;
And heir thou art to this great kingdom born.
Yet hark, behold ! there is a place of doom."
My blood ran cold, for sounds of woe did come.
Then, leaning o'er my couch, mine eyes beheld
A cavern where no beauty ever dwelled.
"Enough !" I cried. "Mine eyes can stand no more."
The picture waned ; then spake she as before
And said : "Beware, from this thy soul refrains ;
Man profits little, though the world he gains,
If by that gain his soul be ever doomed
To dwell within those walls, that fiery tomb."

COULD I DIVINE.

(To ——.)

COULD I divine the language
Of a lily or a rose,
I could tell you of their beauty
And your nature too disclose.

I could tell you why the roses
Chase the lilies from your cheek,
And what the violets in your eyes
Are saying when they speak.

Yet I cannot catch their meaning,
I may never know the art,
Yet I know that they are dreaming
In the garden of your heart.

Still, I know enough of flowers
From the little that I know
That forget-me-nots of heaven
Are blooming here below.

COME HOME.

IF but one virtue you possess
And all the rest have flown,
Protect the one; for righteousness
Regrafted may be grown.

Though leaves may from the others fall
And sin thy soul may mark,
Take comfort; once a prodigal
Found home when all was dark.

A father's love went out to him,
The sacrifice was slain,
The child forgiven for his sin
And welcomed home again.

Come home, O wanderers of earth!
Christ came to save the lost.
Think on the mission of his birth,
The sacrifice, the cost.

SPRING SONG.

THERE is a maiden you may know ;
Her name is Gentle Spring ;
She smiles and flowers bloom, and lo !
The birds begin to sing.
She smiles, and lo ! the flowers bloom,
And bees are on the wing.

Have you not seen this little maid ?
Have you not felt her breath ?
A poet, a great singer said
Of her : "There is no death."
She smiles, and lo ! the flowers bloom ;
Her touch is more than wealth.

REFLECTION.

'TIS hard to lead a pauper's life
On the restless sea of Care,
And find contentment in the strife
If born to gentler air.

'Tis hard to fill a toiler's place
When youth has taken flight;
'Tis hard to battle with disgrace
And turn the tide aright.

'Tis hard to love a lurking foe,
Forgetting that we hate;
'Tis hard to be resigned to go
When death knocks at the gate.

'Tis hard to live to the command,
"To seek the narrow path;"
'Tis hard, O God, to understand
Thy mercy and thy wrath.

AT THE BIER.

O SWEET young face, so pale, so chill!
O Death, was this the Master's will?
O Christ, my balm, to thee I call;
This is the greatest grief of all.

For she was pure as lights that shine
Around thy ever-holy shrine!
O Archer, canst thou tell me why
You let that fatal arrow fly?

But yesterday, and she was fair
As yon sweet rose that knew her care;
Scarce yet abloom to earth a bud,
Now blossoming in angelhood.

O sweet young face, so pale, so chill,
O Death, was this the Master's will?
O Archer, canst thou tell me why
Thou let that fatal arrow fly?

LOVE'S LIGHT.

LOVE'S messenger so young, so fair,
Came to my heart one day
To light the lamp that rested there,
Then smiled and slipped away.

I loved its soft enchanting glow ;
It cast its mystic beams
O'er nooks I ne'er had seen before
On the river of my dreams.

I sought retreats before unknown ;
For One I pined to see,
And found her in a bark alone
Adrift and seeking me.

At least she seemed to be adrift.
I did not ask nor try
To argue this or try to sift
Nor ask the reason why.

I saw the love light in her eyes ;
She saw the same in mine.
We drifted into paradise—
Ah, who can love define?

WHY ASPIRE?

SINCE honors fade and glory wanes
And riches spoken of as vain,
Why do we thus seek to profane
Our souls with tares that choke the grain?

Though kings may rule and tyrants reign,
Why envy them their cares of State,
Their courts, their power, and social gain,
Just to be spoken of as great?

Fear not to live and die unknown;
Take up thy cross though hard the strife.
Death's no respecter of a throne,
Nor does it end the course of life.

A young man to the Master came,
'Tis written (and I feel 'tis true),
And asked his Saviour "just to name
That which he lacked, just what to do."

He mentioned virtues of his own—
No doubt his question was a plea.
"What lackest thou to win My Throne?
Give up thy wealth and follow Me."

Did Christ command that this should be?
'Tis said the young man turned away
Sorrowful and sad of heart that day.
If this he lacked, then so do we.

A LITTLE BOY'S THINGS.

JUST a few things that a little boy wore:
A little blue cap hanging there by the door,
A little blue suit to be worn no more,
A little boy's clothes in the chest on the floor.

Just a few things of a dear little boy:
A little red sled and a broken toy,
A little boy's blocks o'er the nursery strewn—
Yet the little boy dwells in the little boy's home.

Just a little grave in the garden out there,
Just a step in the dark to that Great Somewhere;
Just a whisper may reach him, and often he'll come;
I fancy I see him, yet I feel so alone.

DAME NATURE'S CHARGE.

FROM fast-closed caverns in her great abode
Dame Nature on her fleetest wind bestowed
Her greatest charge: "Go, March, and fleet of wing
Search space till thou hast found mine isle of Spring.

I charge thee seek till thou hast found, nor rest;
Thy compass take; this is a mighty test.
Note well thy flight, and bring with thee aback
My daughter Spring; your path she will bedeck."

Up sprang the bolts, a whirr, a rushing sound,
Nor stayed Prince March to question; with a bound,
A leap! a dash! an instant, and was gone
In search of bride and that fair island home.

On, on, he sped, and with an eagle's eye
Marked in aerial flight, marked earth, sea, sky,
Scanned all till found. O prince at last! at last!
A moment hovered, and his heart beat fast.

At last, great prince, thou now canst fold thy wing;
Thy search is o'er; here lies the isle of Spring.
No eye save one like beauty yet has seen;
The prize is thine, your bride, the island's queen.

"Asleep, alas! my greeting may be cold.
I fear to wake, my presence seemeth bold.
Too fair to hate, canst thou not love, sweet maid?
I'll kneel—yea, kiss thee; be thou not afraid.

Awake, arise; yet would I vigil keep,
And be content to love thee e'en in sleep.
This fairy home of flower and vine and tree
Thou didst it all design alone for me!

Canst thou not hear? Again, then, I will kiss."
"O love," cried Spring (awakening unto bliss);
"O March, great prince [and clinging to his breast],
Thou'st waked my soul! Love has supremely blest!"



MY SHIPS.

I LOOK for no ship to sail over my sky
All labeled with riches and gold;
I long for but one, one dear ship to spy,
Love's ship and its queen to behold.

A snow-white ship on the sea of its sky,
I've dreamed 'twas a precious thing,
And heard in that dream as I saw it pass by
The flash of an angel's wing.

Only one did I say? Nay, that is wrong:
My soul has a ship at sea,
And is silently shifting and drifting along;
Each day it comes nearer to me.

My love's ship is one; it brings heaven adown
To dispel from my heart its gloom;
And my soul's ship is one from my soul's haven bound;
It is victor of death and the tomb.

FAREWELL.

I CANNOT come to say adieu ;
So pen instead this lay,
This farewell note, and wishing you
All pleasures while away,
And wishing you a safe return
To "Home, Sweet Home" some day.
Some day—perchance it may be near,
It may be far away,
It may be when the world is sere,
It may be in its May,
It may be ne'er—it may.

THE DREAMER.

I WOULD rather be a dreamer
And indulge my soul's desire,
Building castles on the ramparts of my dream,
Than to be a cold fact schemer,
Who lives but to acquire
That alone which makes his coffers clink and gleam.

Though the latter may have millions,
Yes, and own a castle home—
What's a million to the dreamer for his dream?
What's a castle with pavilions
If its owner's heart be shorn
Of all that has a sentimental theme?

Keep your millions, haunt your coffers,
Let your souls be fettered fast;
But give to me the freedom for a dream.
Away with doubters, scoffers;
Give my soul a dream repast;
Let me penetrate the shores of the unseen.

Let me delve beyond the ramparts
Of e'en my castle dreams,
Beyond the autumn sunset of a grand and perfect day.
O, let me feel the pulsing heart
Of nature as it seems.
O, let me live, and living, dream my life away.

Let me live and die a-dreaming,
Let my soul be used to flight.
O, Fancy, bear me from earth's sodden care;
Set love's beacon light a-beaming
With a sentimental light,
And lead me from the shades of dark despair.



SUCCESS.

WHATEVER your vocation be,
"Success" is hard to win,
Especially if honesty
Has its full measure in.

'Tis hard to think that things have changed,
Yet Mammon rules to-day;
He's hypnotized and half-deranged
His subjects by his sway.

The world at large may never know
How you've acquired your wealth;
You may not have to prove or show
'Twas honest gain or stealth.

I mean the latter-day "Success,"
Based on the standard "Gold;"
A fortune, nothing more or less—
I speak not of the soul.

If such be your ambitious light
"Success" to thus attain,
Then be a failure; bless the night;
For loss may be your gain.

Be humble, lowly; wealth may weight
Thy soul and sin defile;
For Christ when asked of heaven's great
Replied: "A little child."

AUTUMN.

(Uncle Lawson.)

'TIS artum time, an' natur's got
Er mi'ty bad dezeeze.
De fros' am kilt de flowers
An' skeer'd away de bees.
De maples in de ole fron' yard
Is lookin' kinder sick;
They kotch'd de yaller jaundiss,
And they kotch'd it mi'ty qui'k.
De bla'k-ja'k's kotch'd de smallpox,
An' is lookin' mi'ty sad.
De hick'nut scarlet fever got,
An' ellum's lookin' bad.
De beech de dropsy hit dun kotch'd;
Hits leaves am fallin' thick;
An, simmon trees ain' lookin' well.
De poplar's on de rick.
Fac', all de trees is 'flicted like.
An' hit kinder mak's me grieves.
Yit possums is er gittin' ripe
Wid fallin' of de leaves.

SONG OF THE VIOLET.

WE too have a duty," the violets said.
"We were born, yet we live but to die;
We love the deep green of our lowly bed;
We love the deep blue of our sky.

We too love the maidens of sweet mien and face;
We pine for the dew of their kiss!
We love to be placed in a loved one's vase;
We were born to be loved and for this."

Then go, little friends, to the sweetest of girls,
And dreaming there lie on her breast
Or in the soft furls of her golden curls,
And whisper: "I love her the best."

She will love you, I know, for your sake alone,
And 'tis sweet for her sake to die.
Then go, and I know that you will not mourn
For your bed nor the blue of your sky.

A VALENTINE.

I WOULD like to be the jewel in the comb that
binds your hair,
Or the veil that keeps the dust from off your cheek,
Or the diamond in the necklace of a little girl so fair,
To be near you and to hear you when you speak.

I would like to be a sunbeam and play truant to my
fold,
And I'd follow you, no matter where you'd go,
And I'd nestle on the petals of the flowers in your soul,
And truantlike I'd never let you know.

I would like to be a cuckoo (little follower of Spring)
And turn traitor to the nature of my kind,
Just to bask within the sunshine of your life and sing
and sing
And chirp and be contented with my find.

A WEDDING GIFT.

ACCEPT from me this little vase
And wed it to a rose,
And may it find a resting place
Where other gifts repose!
'Tis true 'tis but a souvenir,
Frail, fragile, and is small;
Yet life's a fragile thing, I hear,
"And little things make all."

A LAWYER'S STORY.

THERE, reader, let me introduce
My hero—hold, my hasty Muse;
Go not too fast, curb up your bit;
My hero does not 'prove of it.
His name he asked to be withheld
For reasons personal, and dwelled
Upon this point as long almost
As on his story of "The Ghost."

Of such I've heard, and now relate,
As it was told to me, and state
I will not change in thought or word
Or deviate from what I've heard.

I am a lawyer, as you know.
On New Year's eve, one year ago,
A strange, strange client rapped my door
That blustrous night. The wind was high,
The moon was hidden in the sky.

My client seemed a little bold,
A good six-footer, young or old
I do not know, I could not tell;
A beard disguised his face, as well
As cap and coat with broad lapel.
He spoke me first, his voice was clear.
"A lawyer," said he; "good, I hear."
"Sir, fear not me; I wish to place
In your hands a curious case."

"I speak not in prose; my nature is rhyme.
I wish for your counsel; can you spare me the time?"
"Why, of course, Sir," I said, "so glad to be able—
Have a seat by the fire." He sat near the table.
I drew a cigar; he refused, then began
A strange introduction to this strange man.
This much is obscure; it's his secret and prime
For a story; I listened—'twas in rhyme.

A STRANGE STORY.

I arrived in your city a few months ago;
I departed at noon without pomp or show.
As a naturalist would on a fair summer's day,
I left it on foot; I travel that way.
Toward dusk it was; I began to feel tired,
A little bit hungry, and then I desired,
As usual of course, to seek here or there
For some kind of shelter, it mattered not where,
When lo! to the west, on the Peacher Mill road,
I beheld through th' shadows, I thought, an abode—
House, barn, mill, or stable, I could not discern—
A full mile to the left, yet where was the turn?
If road from the highway led up to the place,
I failed to discover it, even a trace.
I carry a lantern on this kind of trip;
It is safe, and has saved me many a slip.
Now straight for the place, and my common-way sense
Suggested the shortest; and climbing a fence,
I forced through the thickets as best I could,
Then a rugged hillside, now a pasture, and stood
Just a moment to rest 'neath a tree at the gate
Of a house full deserted, lone, closed—it was late.

Not a light, not a welcome, not even a sound ;
Closed were its windows and doors, and around
And over its chimneys vines hung, and between
The house and the gate tall weeds rank and green.
Not a sound save the beat of my heart. Could it be
That this was the place predestined for me
To explore? This the house I had seen in a dream?
The place seemed familiar, yet why should it seem?
Here, Sir, let me tell of a dream I have had
And to tell why I wander as one that is mad.
My father's grandfather sailed over the sea—
An explorer he was—in the year fifty-three
Last century, and was rich as could be!
Lived rich and died rich here in old Tennessee.
His death was not natural ; at least, it was told
That he had been murdered and robbed of his gold.
My father heard not of his death till too late
To punish the guilty ; they met a like fate.
But now to the point. I have seen in a dream
A house that was haunted, a place that did seem
To resemble in structure the one now in view.
Now back to my story, the thoughts are with you.

I held up my lantern and walked to the door ;
I knocked—lo! it fell with a crash to the floor.
I entered the hall ; in the rear was a stair ;
I ascended as one who was treading on air.
Dust, dust an inch deep! Dust, dust everywhere!
A hallway above, two rooms, nothing more,
The same size as those I had left just before.
Downstairs, however (and I failed to say),
In a room to the right on a rude bed of hay

Lay an uncased pillow and spread ; that is all
That spoke of an inmate. Here, let me recall
A fact that is strange : dust, dust everywhere
A full inch deep on the floor, on the stair,
Yet the pillow was dustless as well as the spread ;
Not even a cobweb hung over the bed.
Perhaps I was frightened ; in truth, I admit
An uncanny feeling disturbed me a bit.
It may have been fancy, it may have been fear,
Still I felt that the presence of some one was near.
Now, placing my light on a high mantel shelf,
I reclined on the bed to reason to self,
When lo ! now a step overhead could be heard.
I sprang to my feet without speaking a word,
Reached up for my lantern—lo ! just up the stair
My ancestor stood—stood watching me there !
There he stood in the ray of my lantern's dim light ;
And although a kinsman, it filled me with fright.
He was clothed in the selfsame suit that he wore
On the day that he sailed from his own native shore.
I tried to speak to him ; I seemed as if dumb.
I tried to approach him ; my limbs were too numb.
Now using his fingers, spelled "Banish thy fright ;
And if brave, follow me ; all, all will be right."
Now descending the stairway down to the floor,
He beckoned me follow him out through the door.
Without hesitating I followed him out
Through the door to the yard, our distance about
Ten feet from each other ; this distance I thought
A little bit safer with such an escort.
Now out through a garden, or what once had been,
I followed ; nor did he e'en question me then.

Now down a ravine to the right of a wood ;
Here he halted, then said, "Youth, you are good!"
(Scarce an arm's length away), then, raising his hand,
He tapped on my shoulder and said: "I command,
I demand you to fall on your knees at my feet.
There lies my treasure ; it is yours ; be discreet.
It is yours and untainted. I was murdered, and here
I have kept my vigil for many a year.
Hoard it not, yet remember this charge I demand :
Consult first the records as to who owns this land,
Then pay to a lawyer as you bid him adieu
A fee in gold coin for my rent and in lieu
Of all damages done by my stay in the home ;
Pay ! Wipe out the debt for all time to come.
I haunt it no longer ; this debt should be paid.
Tradition will tell you how long I have stayed.
Kneel, lift up the treasure of jewels and gold."
I obeyed. He vanished. Now, Sir, I have told
Far more than I should. Here is money for crime ;
I've read from th' records, and find at that time
That your father's father (and the title is clear)
Had purchased that place on the day of the year
Of the death of my kinsman, from a Mr. — ; and so,
If I remember correctly, the records will show
That you sacrificed, Sir, just a few months ago
Home, farm, and all to a man that you know.
I am glad to have met you, glad to repay
The debt of a kinsman ; and here let me say :
Plus the rent, here inclosed in this pouch in my hand
Is the price that your grandfather paid for that land.
This gold is not tainted ; I beg you accept !
I have finished my story, my charge I have kept.

THAT POSSUM DINNER.

(Uncle Lawson.)

SHAK' yo'se'f, sah, an' trot er bit;
You knows you ain't er tryin',
'Kaze I has seed you go an' git
So fas' that dus' was flyin'
Aroun' an' down this stre'ch of road
Jes' lack er cyclome blowin',
An' now you'se waddlin' long jes' lack
You do' know whar 's goin'.

An' I'se jes' boun' an' bleeg'd ter be
On han' fer that ar dinner;
An' smells that possum now an' see
Thim taters stuffin' inner;
An' ef you do play off on me,
You 'trary, stubborn sinner,
Thar'll be a wise mule roun' these parts
If I gits lef' fur dinner.

Now Tobe he kinder bats his ear
An' acts a little 'trary.
'Twas Sunday, and he didn't care
'Cause he was tired and w'ary;
For other mules were eatin' hay—
Mike, Jim an' Kit, an' Mary—
An' res'in' roun' the stable lot
An' barn an' shed an' dairy.



"Now Tobe he kinder bats his ear."

An' now he kinder acts er fool,
An' Uncle Laws cries, "Weh, sah,"
Gits mad, an' 'fo' he kin git cool
Ol' Tobe jes' lams him over
De spatter board kersplash, kerchunk
Out in er wayside pool,
An' Laws gits out an' grabs er rail—
An' Tobe has been to school.

He lams him till his strength is gone,
Yet Tobe thinks he's the winner.
Poor Uncle Laws! he turns fur home
An' says: "Yer beastly sinner!
You'se ruint me, Tobe; you'se sp'iled my dream;
You'se beat me to my dinner.
I'll fix you wid de corn an' hay
Till you gits thin an' thinner."



FIRST LOVE.

A DIEU to love, love's last adieu,
Since love its fate has met;
A trifle now; yet I review
The past with some regret.

Love has a sorrow and a charm,
'Tis true a Bitter Sweet;
I felt its might when youth was warm,
Its sorrow in defeat.

I fought its battle day by day,
A fight to lose or win;
Yet Cupid lost that bloodless fray—
Alas, what might have been!

'Twas heavenlike to touch her hand,
To touch the dress she wore.
Ah, what is love? God understands;
We know but this, no more.

Why should I care for bird or flower
Or art or budding Spring?
Love charmed me with its magic power;
She was life's everything.

She did not seem to care for me;
At times I thought she did.
Her eyes betrayed, for I could see
Or thought the truth she hid.

I did not try to press my suit.
I knew too well she knew
That Cupid did not have to shoot
Again; his first would do.

Soon others felt her magic spell
A-vowing vows galore.
She kept them asking: "Who could tell
Which way the tide would flow?"

I asked the winds if they had heard
Her breathe another's name?
I asked that solitary bird
Of Poe's—no answer came.

I asked myself if love would speak?
I forced it to a test.
My cause was lost, my plea was weak;
She said: "You speak in jest."

Hope died within me, all was dark;
Love might have turned to hate.
Yet no, true love has no such spark
As hatred; it was fate.

I did not weep nor reason why
Love died without a tear.
It died as all true love should die,
Without a hate or fear.

I did not hear her wedding bell
Nor see her as a bride.
A sympathetic fate befell
My cause, for love had died.

I did not see her dressed in white
Nor hear that sacred vow.
I felt perchance that I might blight
Her happiness somehow.

Yet in my heart in fertile soil
Love guards that fairest spot;
It sleeps, and Time cannot despoil
My heart's forget-me-not.

Yet often as I turn the leaves
Of memory's sacred tome
My heart grows solemn-like and grieves;
Love whispers from its loam.



THE BEGGAR.

JUST a one-dollar bill, not much, yet enough
To give to a man who was known as a "tough;"
For whisky or gambling he'd spend it, no doubt.
"Why, of course," said my friend, "you're one dollar
out."
"Let it go," I replied. My friend understood
Why I doubted the gift. "Perhaps it is good,"
Said he (with a laugh). "You will learn some day
To believe just half what the beggar may say."

I heard from that fellow my friend called a "tough."
A pitiful story came home, and enough
Of the truly heroic to make me relate
The last brave act of this unfortunate.
A drunkard they called him, the charitable "they;"
Let them now shout his virtues and say what they may.
I call him a hero, and honor his name,
In spite of his beggarly past, with its shame.
In this way it happened: The midnight express
Was due at a point on the C., O. & S.,
When lo, the man whom so many had spurned
Discerned that a bridge o'er the river had burned.
Did he think of the hour with no time to lose?
'Tis thought that he did. Yet how give the news?
How flag the express from its death-dealing flight?
He swam the swift stream on that cold winter's night,
Scaled up a bluff to the foot of the ridge,
And tore a live torch from the still burning bridge;

Ran, walked, or crawled up the track. Who can tell
Just how it all happened? They found him, and well
For the fate of a hundred or more— It is said
The torch was still burning; its holder was dead,
Frozen stiff at his post with a smile on his face
That bespoke a triumphant end of his race.
What a leap from the darkness up, up into light!
Who can doubt now the goal of his race that night?
What matters the truth of the story or not?
As brave deeds have happened each day and forgot.

So shun not "The Beggar;" his heart may be brave.
Christ died for the fallen and sinner to save;
For ah! who can tell on life's uncertain track
Whose hand may avert our own train from a wreck?



CHRISTMAS SONG.

WHEN the trials of life are oppressive
And my soul goes under the rod,
Then I think of One whose lowly birth
Was a boon to earth from God.

Then I turn to the heavens above me,
Where a million stars look down,
And I think of that simple story told
Of Christ and how he was found.

And I think of his life and his mission,
And I know that his word he will keep,
And I look upon life as a cradling spell
And death as a rocking to sleep.

And I know there will be an awakening,
And I feel it is sin to complain;
For the King in his glory will quicken my dust
And give me to life again.

So I hail the glad dawning of Christmas;
Let the matin bells be rung;
Swell the rich notes from the organ's throat,
Let anthems of glory be sung!

Let us give and be thoughtful in giving,
Let us seek out the poor and relieve;
Let Christendom feel the Master's appeal:
"More blessed to give than receive."

SAID JIM TO BILL.

GOOD Santy Claus is comin', Bill,
An' Christmas nearly here;
An' dad, he's cleaned my chimbley out,
'Cause he said he kinder fear
Ter let good Santy Claus come down
Er chimbley full of sutt;
An' mine's as clean—O, he's jes' boun'
Ter know I'm in de hut.

But, Bill, it was er awful job,
An' pa he worked his best;
Fer it was full of sutt an' dust
An' bricks an' swallow nests!

So Bill he to his daddy goes
An' tells his tale of woe,
An' straightway down his chimbley throws
Er shovel an' er hoe,
An' now his chimbley too is clean.
O happy, happy pair!
Ain't many folks would ever dream
That Santy needs such care!

CHARITY.

FOR all the blessings that thou'lt give,
Lord, make us grateful while we live.

Cause us to think of gratitude,
Make us to feel that 'tis the score
Of life's high markmanship, the core
Of Charity's beatitude,

Thy greatest law. True this must be
All that we have we owe to Thee.

Could we be grateful and deny
To aid the cause of charity,
And feel at peace should we defy
To do thy bidding? No, 'twould be
Neglect, ingratitude to thee.

NOT THERE.

(A German.)

I ATTENDED the ball last night, sweetheart,
And the music that thrilled the air
Was sweet as of yore. Yet O what a bore
Was the dance, for you were not there!

And girls young and fair, sweetheart, were there,
All happy and gay as could be;
And right from the start through kindness of heart
The fairest ones oft favored me.

Yet as I wheeled o'er the smooth waxed floor
'Neath the light shades of purple and blue,
My heart was elsewhere, not there, not there—
'Twas with you, sweetheart, with you.

THE LIGHT OF HOME.

LAST night the moon peeped from a cloud,
The sky was dark and drear,
A moment shone, then drew its shroud,
And earth was cold and sere.

Alone I was and far from home,
Yet courage braved the night
Full many miles through sleet and storm,
Afoot without a light.

'Twas not for self alone I cared;
A wayside inn was near
To seek; I might have better fared;
I thought of one more dear.

On, on I wandered, cold and tired,
Through first a soaking rain
And then a sleet, the least desired;
It smote my face with pain.

Now ceased the sleet, and I could feel
The cold soft kiss of snow,
And all was quiet; e'en my heel
Gave out no sound below.

Now came a most uncanny thought:
Perhaps the way I'd missed,
Or passed the home that I had sought,
I should have found ere this.

Doubt dies, a flash, a ray of light,
A cottage near the road,
A glow that thrilled me with delight—
It was my own abode!

A lamp shone from the window there,
And just behind the light
I saw one kneeling, and her prayer
Went up for me that night.

A pale sweet face kept vigil when
All others were asleep.
God bless the pure good wives of men,
Or else the world would weep.

I might have wandered in the night—
The storm was raging still;
I might have frozen had the light
Failed at the window sill!

In truth, I thought I'd lost my way,
And oft I've thought since then
If lost in life's Gethsemane
Would I find that light again?

AMERICA.

DWELLS there a land beneath the skies
As fair as this, earth's paradise?
Speak, sailor, tell me if there's such
In grandeur, beauty, or in size,
A realm that has e'en half so much
Of all that's beautiful you touch
On every shore. Is there a clime
That has a country full and prime
Of all God's blessings as sublime
As this that now you gaze upon,
Made glorious by our Washington?

Dwells there a land beneath the sun
That boasts another Washington
Or John Paul Jones or Robert Lee?
Pray tell me, great historian,
What of our presidential tree,
From Washington to McKinley?
What nation, be it Goth or Celt,
Can boast another Roosevelt,
Whose power to-day is being felt?
What land is there that you could name
Whose men have won a greater fame?

OPINIONATED.

I'M black, 'tis true, and dirty too,"
Said a little lump of coal.
"In lump or slack or screeny black
I'm worth my weight in gold.

"Now I admit this seems a bit
Of vanity, no doubt ;
And I am told that I am bold
To speak my reasons out.

"I seldom try to argue why
That gold stands on the top,
For I am sought and I am bought,
Or else the world would stop.

"I make you light when all is night ;
I'm sure I keep you warm.
When scarce of wood, I cook your food ;
I am the stay of home.

"In every hour I am the power
That moves the world so fast ;
I've made the sea a child to me ;
I've conquered winter's blast.

"I never cease in war or peace,
On land or on the sea ;
Without me steam would be a dream ;
I drive the Electric Bee."

WANT.

I'VE seen it on the drunkard's face,
A woeful sight to see,
Where signs of vice had left their trace,
As well as penury.

Its fangs are in the sober heart ;
Grim "Want" is feasting there.
Too proud to act the beggar's part,
They battle with despair.

Some beg a mite from those they dread,
Sore-hearted and depressed ;
Some ask for clothes and some for bread
From those whom wealth has blessed.

Some curse the day that they were born—
"Grim Want" dwells ever there ;
They cannot extricate that thorn ;
Their curse has baffled prayer.

Some look upon life's brighter side
With faith, and prayer is heard ;
They did not curse that dreaded tide,
Though hope was long deferred.

Lord, give us grace to hear their cry
And strength to them impart ;
For grace and prayer and charity
Will find the stricken heart.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

(1897-1898.)

TAST night as Slumber's soothing hand
 Pressed gently on my brow
A dream slipped from her fingers' end,
 A theme of where and how
The records of the years are kept,
 By whom? The dream portrayed
Time's great historian from a sphere
 Where all things are surveyed.

And there the writer's Capitol
 Of granite walls stood high,
A building with a mighty dome
 That seemed to pierce the sky,
A place where beamed perennial day;
 And there the writer sat—
A young man once, now old and gray,
 A-weary and desolate.

His ponderous book before him lay.
 "Just one more day," he said,
"When Ninety-Seven's history
 Lies sepulchered as dead.
I then may sleep and rest awhile.
 Just one more day, and then
A young man hails the New Year's birth,
 Another wields my pen."



"A dream slipped from her fingers' end."

I saw him stamp the finished sheet
With seals of Ninety-Seven.
The hour was near, his work complete;
He kneeled and prayed to Heaven;
And then a mighty bell was tolled
From out the building's dome,
And a strong young man was ushered in
And the old was taken home.



BOAST NOT.

BOAST not of strength, if you be strong;
A silent prayer to keep it true
May cause that blessing to be long—
Humility may even do.

Strive not to crush a weaker soul
Because of strength, for it may be
A curse unto that higher goal,
And not a blessing unto thee.

Whate'er thy talent, make it count,
And feel you have in life a place;
Hide not thy strength if you would mount
To win God's favor and his grace.

Just use it in a quiet way
To all that's right and pure and good.
Ah, then, each deed will speak some day
And life be better understood.

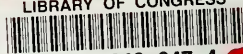
GENTLE SPRING.

THERE is a maiden coming soon
From far-off mystic land,
Who has betrothed unto this earth
Her magic little hand.

There is a maiden coming soon;
Her name is "Gentle Spring;"
Her breath will cause the trees to bud
And cause the birds to sing!

There is a maiden coming soon,
O fairest of the fair!
She loves this world, and we love her—
O she's an artist rare!

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